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05 OCT 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Associate Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community
Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM : Leslie C. Dirks
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : Status of Interagency Backfire Study

1. This memorandum is to inform you of the current status of an interagency study to resolve the Soviet Backfire bomber's range/payload capability.

2. The Weapon and Space Systems Intelligence Committee (WSSIC) was asked by the NIO/SP to prepare an annex on Backfire for NIE 11-3/8-76. That request was made before CIA's analysis of Backfire was completed. When CIA's analysis showed a large reduction in the estimated range/payload capability the Air Force undertook a parallel analysis effort to investigate CIA's results. The Air Force has not committed themselves to a deadline for their analysis, but they estimate that it will not be complete for "some months." In the meantime, the WSSIC study is being held in limbo, and parallel text is being prepared for NIE 11-3/8-76 stating the different positions. That text is scheduled for completion by WSSIC in late October or early November.

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SUBJECT: Status of Interagency Backfire Study

25X1 3. We do not know why the Air Force waited until after the CIA study was complete before starting a parallel analysis effort. The CIA study includes a more comprehensive analysis [] which the Air Force could have been investigating since as early as April 1975 when they were first informed of the CIA effort. The fact and nature of CIA's analysis have been open and available to the Intelligence Community since that time. I have attached a chronology of meetings and publications where the analysis was discussed.

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Leslie C. Dirks

Attachment:

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